

REMARKS

Claims 40-48, 50, 57-63, 65-66 and 70 remain pending herein.

1. Examiner O'Hern is thanked for courtesies extending during a personal interview with Applicant's undersigned representative and the inventor of the present application, Dr. Ray Bryden on April 3, 2008. The substance of the interview has been incorporated into the following remarks.

2. Claims 40-42, 44-48, 50, 57-60 and 63 were rejected under §103 over Sonntag in view of Hida. Claim 43 was rejected in further view of Dussaulx et al. Claims 61-62 and 70 were rejected in further view of Hillig. These rejections are respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

As discussed during the interview, the claimed ceramic component is drawn to a silicon carbide ceramic body having an oxide layer, the oxide layer containing an amorphous matrix phase and a crystalline phase provided in the amorphous matrix phase. The amorphous phase comprises silica and the crystalline phase comprises at least one of aluminosilicate and alumina. Amendments to claim 40 have been made herein to clarify particular features related to the ceramic body, namely that the amorphous matrix phase and the crystalline phase of the oxide layer form an adherent, conformal layer that resists spalling and flaking, and function to passivate and protect the ceramic body from excessive oxidation. Support for the claim amendments is found in the present specification, paragraphs [0032] – [0034], for example. The foregoing claim amendments serve to clarify the nature of the amorphous and crystalline phases making up the oxide layer and emphasize the desirable functionality of those phases, namely to passivate and protect the ceramic body from oxidation.

As discussed during the telephonic interview, replication of the main prior art reference Sonntag reveals that Sonntag fails to teach or suggest a ceramic body having an oxide layer as claimed. In this respect, the attention of Examiner O'Hern is drawn to the Rule 132 Declaration by Dr. Bryden enclosed herewith. For sake of brevity, it is believed that the Rule 132 Declaration is self-explanatory, the details thereof not being repeated herein. In short, it explains that the replication of the Sonntag prior art does not result in an oxide layer as claimed, one

being adherent and conformal, resisting spalling and flaking and functioning to passivate and protect the ceramic body from excessive oxidation. Indeed, it was found that the oxide layer of Sonntag was characterized by regions of flakes that easily spalled and fall away from the ceramic body by normal finger pressure. This flaking and spalling thus serves to undesirably expose the underlying substrate of the ceramic body and cause excessive oxidation, quantified by a 40% increase in weight gain due to oxidation. It is also noted that the secondary references fail to cure the deficiencies of Sonntag.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the presently claimed invention would not have been obvious over Sonntag in view of the various secondary references. Accordingly, withdrawal of the §103 rejections is respectfully requested.

3. Claims 65 and 66 were rejected under §112, second paragraph. In addition, Claims 65 and 66 were also rejected over Sonntag in view of Hida. The foregoing rejections are moot in view of the cancellation of those claims.

Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is requested to issue a Notice of Allowance for all pending claims.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action by the Applicant would be desirable for placing this application in even better condition for issue, the Examiner is requested to telephone Applicant's undersigned representative at the number listed below.

Applicant does not believe that any additional fees are due, but if the Commissioner believes additional fees are due, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account Number 50-3797.

Date

6/18/08

Respectfully submitted,


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